



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**FORMER SIAREY'S YARD, STATION ROAD,  
CHINNOR**

**(PHASE III)**

**SP 7557 0069**

*On behalf of*

*Linden Homes Thames Valley Ltd*

**June 2009**

**REPORT FOR** Linden Homes Thames Valley Ltd  
The Old Brewery  
Brewery Courtyard  
Draymans Lane  
Marlow  
Buckinghamshire  
SL7 2FF

**PREPARED BY** John Moore

**ILLUSTRATION BY** Dave Gilbert

**FIELDWORK** 17<sup>th</sup> June 2008 – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2009

**REPORT ISSUED** 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009

**ENQUIRES TO** John Moore Heritage Services  
Hill View  
Woodperry Road  
Beckley  
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ  
Tel/Fax 01865 358300  
Email: [info@jmheritageservices.co.uk](mailto:info@jmheritageservices.co.uk)

**Site Code** CHSR 08  
**JMHS Project No:** 1934  
**Archive Location** The archive is currently held by JMHS and will be deposited with Oxford Museum Service in due course with accession number: 2008.69

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief between June 2008 and May 2009 as part of a condition of planning permission for redevelopment of this site. Nothing of archaeological significance was found.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

The development site is located to the west of Station Road and south of Oakley Road, situated on the southern side of Chinnor (NGR SP 7557 0069). The site lies at about 130m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is Brickearth over Chalk. The site prior to development was a disused sawmill.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

South Oxfordshire County Council granted planning permission (P07/E1616) for a mixed use development of 31 residential dwellings and 3 business units with associated access and parking. Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site a condition was attached to the permission requiring the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during groundworks. This was in order to preserve by record any archaeological remains within the site and was in line with PPG 16 and Local Plan Policies.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The site lies within an area of archaeological potential as it is located on the edge of the historic core of Chinnor with the medieval parish church of St Mary's situated less than 200 metres to the east (County Historic Environment Record PRN 5891; NGR SP 7567 0088). Chinnor also lies between the ancient routes of the Upper and Lower Icknield Ways, and Roman and Saxon remains have been found in and around the settlement. Archaeological fieldwork carried out in advance of development at the corner of Church Road and Church lane produced evidence of Romano-British occupation (PRN 15833; SP 7461 0085).

Undated human remains have been found in the 1920s on two sites; one 320m to the north west of the application area (PRN 17286; SP 7532 0073) and another found with an undated pottery urn 140m to the north east (PRN 17287; SP 7568 0077). A further burial dated to the Saxon period was recorded along the Lower Icknield Way to the north of the site and it is thought possible that there was a Saxon cemetery in the vicinity of this part of the settlement (PRN 2814; SP 7520 0117). It is possible therefore that this development will disturb further aspects of these deposits.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

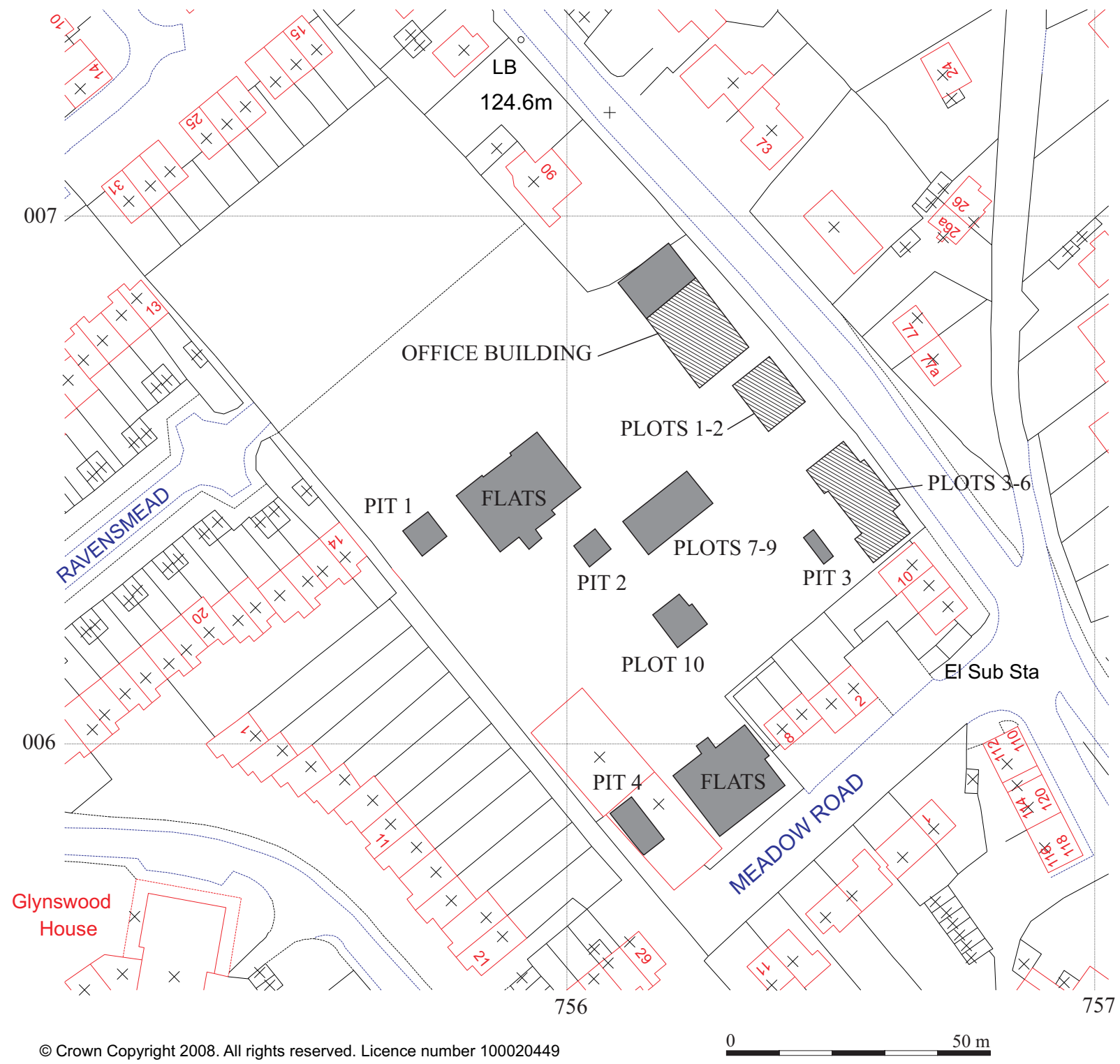


Figure 1. Site and Watching Brief Area Locations

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the client and Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

#### **3.2 Methodology**

It was intended that an archaeologist would be on site during the excavation for the roads. Any archaeological remains exposed would be recorded to an appropriate standard. Should no remains be present within the road lines then six 20m x 1.6m trenches then would be excavated in the larger areas between the roads. If these confirmed the lack of archaeological remains on the site the watching brief would then cease.

However this was not the case as the road lines were not stripped until towards the end of the project and some ground reduction and excavation for foundations had been carried out prior to JMHS being notified.

Therefore a watching brief was maintained during excavation of foundation trenches for the building plots, and during excavation for some of the pits for soakaways and manholes.

Any archaeological features or other remains i.e. concentrations of artefacts revealed during the watching brief, were to be recorded by written, drawn and photographic record. All artefacts were to be collected and retained except for concentrations of building material where only a representative sample would be retained.

### **4 RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Results (Figure 1)**

The excavation for the majority of the foundation trenches and the reduced excavation for the floor for the office building in the north-east corner of the site had been carried out prior to be notified. The base and sides of the excavation were examined and no archaeological features were identified (Fig 1, hatched area). Excavation for the north part of the foundations was monitored and no archaeological remains were present.

Excavation for footings for Plots 1-2 and 3-6 had also been carried out and had already been poured with concrete. No archaeological features were apparent in the tops of the trenches or in the base of excavation for the floor beams.

The excavation for footings for Plots 7-9, Plot 10, and the north block of flats were monitored. The reduced level dig, well into the natural chalk, for the south block of flats was monitored along with the excavations for selected soakaways and manholes (Fig. 1, Pits 1-4). This gave a representative sample across the site.

No significant archaeological features or artefacts were identified.

Throughout the site was evidence of demolition activity associated with the clearance of the site prior to construction commencing. This included remains of infilled trenches where foundations had been removed. The made ground varied in depth across the site from 400mm to 1.2m including infilling of former foundation trenches..

## **4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results**

Although groundworks in certain parts of site had been carried out without archaeological monitoring and there had been extensive demolition work, the amount of groundworks monitored across the rest of the area was sufficient to establish the absence of significant use of the area in earlier times.

## **5 FINDS**

The only finds other than demolition material were the occasional sherd of late 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery. These were not retained.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

No evidence of activity pre-dating the later post-medieval period was present on the site.

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

English Heritage 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994 (revised 2001), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Watching Brief*.